

The COURT COMPASS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS JUDICIAL BRANCH



Assistant Chief Court Officer
Phyllis Ainsworth-Okamura

Springfield's Officer Ainsworth-Okamura Named 2002 Trial Court Employee of the Year

For her outstanding service to the Springfield court community, including performing life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation on a stricken litigant last year, Assistant Chief Court Officer Phyllis A. Ainsworth-Okamura has been named the 2002 Trial Court Employee of the Year.

"Assistant Chief Court Officer Ainsworth-Okamura has continually performed above and beyond the call of duty in a challenging court security environment," Trial Court Security Director Francis P. Keough said.

Her immediate supervisor, Chief Court Officer Kenneth M. O'Connor, Jr., said he nominated her "because she has done so much to improve and enhance the courts here at Springfield." One of her projects, the development of the Springfield District Court

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Dorchester District Court Developing National Model to Reduce Domestic Violence

At a recent Domestic Violence Court session at Dorchester District Court, First Justice Sydney Hanlon appeared pleased when probation officers reported the progress of an offender standing before her.

The man had been convicted of an offense involving domestic abuse, but since then had been faithfully fulfilling the conditions of his probation. He had missed none of his required sessions of batterers' prevention counseling and substance abuse counseling, and he had passed all his drug tests.

"Is the batterers' intervention program working for you?" she asked. He answered that he was learning a lot during the counseling sessions. Judge Hanlon congratulated him, and said she looked forward to hearing of his continuing cooperation at his next court date in 120 days. He thanked her and left, appearing pleased by the positive exchange with the Judge.

An offender appearing before her fifteen minutes later, however, was the subject of a less positive report. He had missed counseling sessions, had recently been fired from his job, and had failed a blood-alcohol test. Judge Hanlon extended his probation, with the warning that any missed counseling session or failed test for substance abuse would immediately result in jail time.

She also pointed out that once he was released from jail he would be faced with having to fulfill the same conditions of probation with which he was currently struggling.

'With the same judges in the domestic violence sessions, you can have a certain amount of consistency in sentencing. People from the beginning understand what the penalties might be.'

—Dorchester District Court First Justice
Sydney Hanlon

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Medical Response Team, had a dramatic benefit for a litigant who had fainted and stopped breathing last summer.

"Officer Okamura rushed to the person's assistance, performed CPR, and actually brought the person back before the ambulance arrived," Officer O'Connor said.

Several years ago she helped to develop and streamline procedures for the Medical Response Team as a way to quickly respond to such emergencies. Members of the Team, including two associate court officers who are also trained as emergency medical technicians, are quickly dispatched to anyone at the court who is suffering a medical emergency. At the same time, an ambulance dispatcher is called and given details about the person's location and condition.

Officer Ainsworth-Okamura also performs her daily duties with professionalism and care. "She has the trust and respect of the entire staff," Officer O'Connor said. "She carries out security policies in a very fair, equitable manner, with very good administrative skills, plus she has the energy of five people. She's very good at helping people, and she does so without wanting any recognition. I was elated when I learned that she had been chosen as the Employee of the Year."

Officer Ainsworth-Okamura, however, credits her award to the team of people around her. "We've got a very good group of guys and women here," she said. "The only reason I've been chosen is because of the great group of people I work with."

She began working for the Trial Court as a Court Officer at Hampshire Probate and Family Court in 1993, after having worked in security at a retail store and a medical center. In 1999, she was promoted to her current position, where she helps to manage the prisoner lock-up area at the Springfield Hall of Justice and schedules more than thirty court officers for District Court and Probate and

2002 Trial Court Employee Excellence Award Winners	
Miriam Brady Case Specialist Orleans District Court	Dennis Maietta Assistant Chief Probation Officer Falmouth District Court
Jane Crowe Administrative Assistant II Office of the Commissioner of Probation	Maureen McEachern Assistant Chief Probation Officer Somerville District Court
Annette Fellows Case Specialist Suffolk Juvenile Court	Kathleen Mitchell Head Administrative Assistant Barnstable County/Town of Plymouth Juvenile Court
James Gavaghan Operations Supervisor Suffolk Probate and Family Court	Karen Nagle Case Coordinator Lynn District Court
Joseph Hanrahan Court Officer Worcester Housing Court	Pauline Passanisi Judicial Secretary Norfolk Superior Court
Dorothy Hopkins Head Administrative Assistant Boston Municipal Court	Jean Pepper Court Interpreter Lynn District Court
Paul Johnston Lead Court Analyst IT Project	John Raftery Court Officer South Boston District Court
Jon Leconte Probation Officer Bristol Probate and Family Court	Renee Sherman Case Specialist III Northern Berkshire District Court
Lynne Lynch Operations Supervisor Essex Probate and Family Court	

Family Court sessions in Springfield and several nearby District Courts. She also works shifts in courtrooms and in the lock-up area, ensuring the safety of judges, court staff and the public within the courthouse.

She says the most rewarding aspect of her job is working with her fellow court officers, judges, court staff, and the public, including the detainees. "I really do enjoy working with the prisoners. I treat all the prisoners like human beings. I'm not here to judge them, I'm here to help them get through the day."

Officer Ainsworth-Okamura is the third court officer to be named

Trial Court Employee of the Year, following the selection of Boston Juvenile Court Assistant Chief Court Officer Paul B. Courtney and Brockton Superior Court Court Officer Thomas W. Condon, Jr., in previous years.

In addition to the Employee of the Year Award, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara also has announced the names of seventeen recipients of the 2002 Employee Excellence Awards. The Administrative Office of the Trial

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gling. "There is no one in this room who hasn't had bad things happen to them," she said. "You can't use that as an excuse. You have to take responsibility for yourself."

The man thanked her, and the judge moved on to the next case.

Federal Grant

The Domestic Violence Court in Dorchester originated in 1999, when the U.S. Department of Justice selected Boston, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as recipients of grants to develop a national model for reducing domestic violence. The series of grants, originally won by the City of Boston on behalf of the Boston Police Department, is expected to total \$6.6 million by the end of 2004. The grants help to pay for a cohesive effort by Dorchester District Court, the Massachusetts Probation Service, Boston Police Department, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and service agencies that assist victims and provide better intervention and human service agency referral services for offenders.

The Dorchester judges in the Domestic Violence session hear all cases involving physical or mental abuse among intimate partners, including all cases involving 209A Abuse Prevention Orders. Last year, the judges and staff conducted 1,106 arraignments, 3,648 hearings on 209A



Dorchester District Court First Justice Sydney Hanlon conducts a session of the Domestic Violence Court, with the assistance of Associate Probation Officer Patrick Skehill, standing behind the bench, Assistant Clerk-Magistrate Elaine Gately, standing, and Case Specialist Shalese Leonard, seated.

matters, and 1,530 probation hearings and reviews.

Domestic Violence Project Director Deirdre Kennedy, whose experience includes more than nine years as a probation officer at Dorchester District Court, coordinates the efforts of all the entities working together to reduce the problem of domestic violence.

"The session allows for specialization in every phase of the court process," she said. The grant funded the hiring of four probation officers and two associate probation officers who handle domestic violence cases, which has reduced the average caseload of all probation officers at Dorchester District Court from approximately 160 cases to about 100 cases. This allows them to spend more time out of the courthouse on home vis-

its, both announced and unannounced, to ensure that their charges are fulfilling their conditions of probation.

The grant also provided for more staff in the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and in victim service organizations, including the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, the Association of Haitian Women in Boston, Casa Myrna Vasquez, and Northeastern University School of Law's Domestic Violence Institute. Representatives of six service agencies share office space at the Court so that they are

immediately available to victims of domestic violence.

An outreach worker from the Massachusetts Prevention Center also is at the court each day. "They try to de-escalate problems by making sure that people served with a restraining order have a place to stay that night, or getting them to a detox program, for example. They work to keep the batterer from being fixated on the victim," Ms. Kennedy said.

Role of the Judge

Within the range of efforts to combat domestic violence, however, perhaps the most critical moments occur when the offender comes before the judge.

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Court's Employee of the Year Selection Committee chose the honorees from among more than 100 nominations the Committee received this year.

"Our congratulations and gratitude go to all the recipients of this

year's Employee Excellence Awards," Chief Justice Dortch-Okara said. "They are the unsung heroes of the Trial Court who deserve this special recognition for their hard work and dedication in serving the public and the courts

throughout the Commonwealth."

Chief Justice Dortch-Okara, Trial Court Department Chief Justices, and AOTC Department heads recognized all eighteen employees for their high level of service at a ceremony in Springfield in June. ■

Hon. Manuel Kyriakakis Named Chief Justice of the Housing Court

Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara has appointed Honorable Manuel Kyriakakis to a five-year term as Chief Justice of the Housing Court. Chief Justice Kyriakakis succeeds Chief Justice E. George Daher, who retired on June 16 upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of seventy.

Chief Justice Kyriakakis, a resident of South Dartmouth, has been the First Justice of the Southeastern Housing Court since its establishment in 1990. He previously was a partner in the Fall River law firm of Horvitz & Horvitz & Kyriakakis.

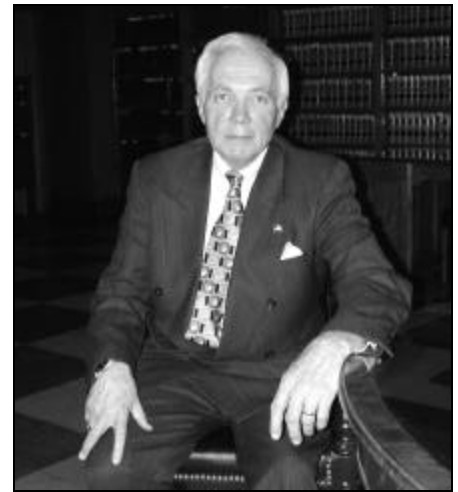
He received a law degree from Boston University Law School, a master's degree in taxation from Boston University Graduate School, and a

bachelor's degree from Brown University.

"Judge Kyriakakis is the right person to move the Court forward during this challenging time for the Trial Court," Chief Justice Dortch-Okara said. "He has the necessary experience, intellect, and temperament to take this Court to new heights."

She also thanked Chief Justice Daher for his decades of pioneering leadership. "Chief Justice Daher's vision and determination have advanced the Housing Court to its present prominence," she said.

In 1972, he became the first person employed by the newly created Boston Housing Court when he was appointed Clerk. He became a Judge in 1974, Chief Justice of the Boston Housing



Housing Court Chief Justice Manuel Kyriakakis

Court in 1976, and Chief Justice of the statewide Housing Court Department upon its creation in 1978.

Domestic Violence Court

"Over the course of the '90s, there was a lot of training of police and prosecutors concerning domestic violence," Judge Hanlon said. "But at some point there came the realization that the situation wouldn't change without judges; that unless the court system holds offenders accountable, the efforts will not make a difference."

Judges in the Domestic Violence Court are closely involved in monitoring offenders. In a tactic adapted from drug courts, where offenders are in court as frequently as once every two weeks, domestic violence offenders appear before a judge a minimum of four times. All probation hearings and reviews are conducted in the courtroom.

"I see each offender after thirty days, then again after ninety days, after 120 days, and again after another 120 days," Judge Hanlon said. "This steps up accountability. An offender, knowing he's due in court soon, is more likely to behave himself. Those who don't may get a warning, may be held for a short time in jail, or may be sent to prison."

Another feature of the session is that all domestic violence cases are

heard by the same judges — either Judge Hanlon, Judge James W. Coffey, or Judge Timothy H. Gailey. Before May, when she was transferred to Malden District Court, Judge Rosalind H. Miller also presided over the session.

"With the same judges in the domestic violence sessions, you can have a certain amount of consistency in sentencing," Judge Hanlon said. "People from the beginning understand what the penalties might be, and this sense of continuity is very useful during probation hearings and reviews."

"If I'm the only judge an individual has seen, then that person can't come back to me and say, 'I didn't understand my conditions of probation,' because I can look at my notes and say that I know I explained it. When you know the offender and have continuity, you can make more informed decisions."

Cause for optimism

The benefits of the Domestic Violence Program so far cannot be quantified, due to a lack of specific data

from before the program began, and because it has been in effect less than two years. However, the coordinated effort and the Dorchester District Court's role within it are considered by many to be a significant method in countering a serious, national problem.

"Domestic violence is such a huge portion of our society's criminal behavior," Ms. Kennedy said. "It is the leading reason why women go to emergency rooms. The resolution of this problem will depend on our ability to form a partnership among all the agencies involved, and already the project has created a lot more collaboration."

Judge Hanlon is optimistic that the project will help to provide a useful model for the rest of the nation.

"Judges generally don't get a lot of good news in the courtroom, but you get in this session a real sense of hope. The problem of domestic violence is not intractable. There is a lot of room for growth and improvement, and I feel we are privileged to be able to see some of that growth and improvement actually taking place." ■

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COMPASS POINTS



Housing Association Honors Chief Justice E. George Daher

Retired Housing Court Chief Justice E. George Daher has been selected as the recipient of the Rental Housing Association's 2002 Excellence in Public Service Award.

The Award is presented annually to the individual who best exemplifies excellence in public service benefitting the rental housing community. Recipients in past years include the late Congressman John Joseph Moakley, Congressman Barney Frank, and former Governor William F. Weld.

The Association, a division of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board, is recognizing Chief Justice Daher for his "continually demonstrated excellence, responsible leadership, and service to the task of improving the quality of housing and protecting the rights of residents and owners alike."

The award will be presented to Chief Justice Daher during a ceremony in December.

Drug Courts Win Grants Totalling \$1.1 Million

Three Massachusetts courts have won a total of \$1.1 million in grant funding from the U.S. Justice Department for their drug court programs.

The Hampden County Juvenile Court in Springfield, under First Justice Rebekah J. Crampton, will receive \$500,000 to begin its drug court sessions.

The City of Lawrence won a \$300,000 enhancement grant for continuing the drug court session at Lawrence District Court, which was begun by First Justice Michael T. Stella, Jr. in May 2000, and is currently conducted by Judge Allen J. Jarasitis. A \$300,000 grant also was awarded to continue drug court ses-



At the awards ceremony at the Supreme Judicial Court Courtroom, from left, are SJC Justice Martha B. Sosman; SJC Justice Francis X. Spina; Foley Hoag LLP Attorneys Toni Wolfman and Michele Whitham; Worcester Attorney Henry B. Raphaelson; SJC Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall; Boston Attorney S. Stephen Rosenfeld; and Boston Attorney Mary K. Ryan, Chair of the SJC Standing Committee on *Pro Bono* Legal Services.

SJC Standing Committee Presents Adams Awards for Attorneys' Commitment to *Pro Bono* Service

On behalf of the Supreme Judicial Court Standing Committee on *Pro Bono* Legal Services, Supreme Judicial Court Justice Francis X. Spina presented the first Adams *Pro Bono Publico* Awards to three recipients for their outstanding commitment to volunteer legal services for the poor and disadvantaged.

Adams Awards, named in honor of John Adams and John Quincy Adams, were presented at a

ceremony in the SJC Courtroom in May to Henry B. Raphaelson, a private practitioner in Worcester specializing in real estate and landlord/tenant law; S. Stephen Rosenfeld, an attorney in the Boston firm of Rosenfeld and Rafik; and the Boston firm of Foley Hoag LLP, represented by Toni Wolfman, coordinator of the firm's *pro bono* program, and Co-Managing Partner Michele Whitham.

sions at Brighton District Court, conducted by Presiding Justice R. Peter Anderson; Chelsea District Court, conducted by Judge Diana L. Maldonado; Roxbury District Court, also conducted by Judge Anderson, and South Boston District Court, conducted by First Justice Robert P. Ziemian.

Photo Credit

On the Newsmakers page of the Spring 2002 Court Compass, credit for the photo of Hampshire Law Library Head Law Librarian Barbara Fell-Johnson was inadvertently omitted. The photographer was India Blue of the Law Tribune newspaper.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



On April 1, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara appointed Superior Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman as Project Executive for the Trial Court's Information Technology Project. Creation of the position was recommended by the Trial Court's IT Review Committee to oversee the IT Project's final phase.

Funded through a \$75 million bond bill, the Trial Court's IT Project involves the development of an integrated, comprehensive case management system called MassCourts. Under Chief Justice Dortch-Okara's leadership, and with the assistance of Bristol Probate and Family Court Judge Anthony R. Nesi, who served as interim Project Director, and the Administrative Office of the Trial Court's Information Technology Department, the necessary infrastructure and interim systems have been put in place in most departments. In May, soon after the Trial Court issued a Request for Responses (RFR) from qualified bidders for developing MassCourts, Judge Hillman discussed the progress of the IT Project.

Court Compass: What has the IT Project accomplished so far?

Judge Hillman: There has been an enormous amount of work accomplished. We have put the technical infrastructure for MassCourts in place: central servers, the networks for accessing them, and, perhaps most important of all, more than 4,000 new personal computers.

We've developed the interim system called BasCOT (Basic Court Operations Tools), which has been rolled out in the District Court, the Land Court, the Probate and Family Court, and the Boston Municipal Court.

Legacy systems — the systems already in place — have been enhanced or replaced by other interim systems. That is no mean feat. Some

of those systems were getting old and creaky and were part of the reason we needed the bond bill in the first place. For example, the Juvenile Court now has an interim case management system called Juris, which was originally built by a company that is no longer in existence. We were fortunate enough to hire one of its employees to expand the old system and to serve as our technical liaison going forward.

'MassCourts ... will allow us to determine where our resources are being spent, eliminate redundant data entry, and enhance the accuracy of information and records management.'

— Superior Court Judge
and Project Executive of the IT Project
Timothy S. Hillman

Judge Hillman: The Probate and Family Court is using BasCOT in thirteen divisions and we are now working with Worcester to convert its legacy system and install BasCOT, and that's going to be coming up shortly.

The BMC's BasCOT is completely installed for its criminal business, and the BMC will continue to use the ForeCourt system for its civil business until MassCourts begins.



The IT Project also has developed web-related applications, such as the Trial Court Information Center (www.ma-trialcourts.org). That is the site where members of the bar and the media, once they have registered, may access Superior Court case docket information and schedules. The BMC also has a wonderful system called the EACC (Electronic Application for Criminal Complaint), which allows the Boston Police Department to file applications for criminal complaints electronically. The EACC has worked out very well, and it is serving as a model for future interfaces between the courts and outside agencies.

CC: Will BasCOT, the interim system, continue to expand, or is it now complete?

For civil cases in the District Court, BasCOT has been rolled out to all but a few of the western court divisions, and these are scheduled. Criminal BasCOT is now in Woburn District Court, with the rest of the divisions to follow. The Land Court also is using BasCOT.

CC: Is unifying these different systems one of the major goals of the IT Project?

Judge Hillman: Yes. First of all, MassCourts will enable all of us to be on the same page. It will allow us to determine where our resources are being spent, eliminate redundant data entry, and enhance the accuracy of information and records management. Routine orders will be in the same form.



Festivities Mark Renaming of Old Suffolk County Courthouse after John Adams

Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall addresses several hundred people, including leaders of the Judicial, Executive, and Legislative Branches, during ceremonies marking the renaming of the Old Suffolk County Courthouse as the John Adams Courthouse. Festivities, held at the Social Law Library on June 12, included a ceremonial signing of the naming legislation by Governor Jane Swift. Seated to the left of the podium, from the left, are: Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly, Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas M. Finneran, Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara, Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management Commissioner David B. Perini, and Governor Swift.

Questions & Answers

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For example, when a department issues a habeas corpus, it will be in the same form as in the other Trial Court departments. Common data fields and processes also will streamline court activities and make it easier for the public to understand them.

CC: Can you summarize what the Trial Court will be able to accomplish with MassCourts?

Judge Hillman: In general, the uniform practices and common processes will allow the Trial Court to respond to public needs in a better, more timely fashion.

However, it is difficult to summarize all the different practices. The docket for someone filing for a divorce in the Probate and Family Court in Essex County will have a different look and feel than the docket for a criminal case in Barnstable County.

One standard item will be the method in which a case is entered. We'll all be doing that in the same way. There also will be a more robust scheduling feature. A judge, for example, will be able to access the computerized docket sheet to find an appropriate time for a lengthy trial and view sched-

uling conflicts for attorneys, district attorneys and other judges. The calendars may appear different in the different departments, but the principles will be the same.

CC: Once MassCourts replaces BasCOT and the other current systems, such as ForeCourt and Juris, will typical court users notice much difference?

Judge Hillman: Yes, they will, but the amount of difference depends on what system they were on before. MassCourts, which will be Windows-based, will increase case-management functionality, and be capable of interfacing with systems in use by outside



agencies. Since BasCOT and ForeCourt also are Windows-based, MassCourts won't look that different, but it will have much more capability. I think all the Trial Court departments will notice a marked improvement in the quality of their case management system.

CC: How much work has already been done on MassCourts?

Judge Hillman: My predecessor, the IT Project Advisory Board, the IT Project Executive Committee, and court and IT Project staff have done an enormous amount of work on the RFR, which is the bid package, including functional requirements, procedures, flow and statistics. The functional requirements — the business practices, the way the District Court or the Housing Court initiate a case, for example — are extremely significant. Every practice has been defined and written into the bid specifications so that when vendors prepare their bids, they will understand everything we need from them. It is the comprehensive document that says, "Here's what MassCourts will do."

CC: When do you plan to select a vendor?

Judge Hillman: In mid-May we released the RFR, and we had a vendors' conference in late May. The bids are due on July 9. We will evaluate the bids and award a contract in September.

Advisory Boards Revise Guide to Promote Gender, Racial and Ethnic Equality in the Courts

The Racial and Ethnic Access and Fairness Advisory Board and the Gender Equality Advisory Board to the Chief Justice for Administration and Management are revising the 1993 Court Conduct Handbook. The updated guide, "Within our Reach: Gender, Racial and Ethnic Equality in the Courts," provides guidelines for judges, court employees, attorneys, and members of the public to promote gender, racial and ethnic equality in the courts. In the photo at right are: Southern New England School of Law Dean Robert V. Ward, Co-Chair of the Racial and Ethnic Access and Fairness Board; Chief Justice for Administration and Management Barbara A. Dortch-Okara; Chelsea District Court First Justice Timothy H. Gailey, Vice Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Board; and Boston Juvenile Court Judge Leslie Harris, Co-Chair of the Racial and Ethnic Access and Fairness Board. Also working on the project but not pictured are Superior Court Judge Nonnie S. Burnes, Chair of the Gender Equality Advisory Board; and Lois Frankel, Trial Court Coordinator for Gender Issues.



Questions & Answers

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CC: When do you estimate that MassCourts will be complete?

Judge Hillman: After the vendor is selected, we will go through the iterative phase, when we will compare our functional requirements and the vendor's proposed application and fine-tune them. The final completion date depends on the vendor. We're on schedule, but a lot depends on what the vendors come up with in their bid packages and how close their proposals fit our standards.

I hope that within two years the project will be to the point where we are talking about the pilot site success, roll-out, and the next build. MassCourts should be in use for a long time, but there will be small areas in which we're going to want to do things better or differently. That will be just the fine-tuning of the final product. So I would think within two

years we'll be there.

CC: In managing this complex project, what kinds of decisions are you confronted with?

Judge Hillman: My most important role is ensuring that the technical and full-time project staff are able to do their job without the kind of interference that is natural in the process. Every Trial Court department has a different and legitimate claim to having their business practices remain unchanged and having their priorities addressed first. But we're very lucky in having extremely capable people working on this project, including Susan Laniewski, the project manager, Denise Queally, the deputy project manager, and their staff. My job is to just make sure they are allowed to do their jobs to the best of their abilities and balance needs and priorities. ■

The Court Compass

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